



Leading Web Services Company Alentus Moves to Ceryx after Previous Outsourcing Partner Fails to Meet the Demands of Business Grade E-mail Users.

Executive Summary

Head Office: Aliso Viejo, California

Industry: Internet Services Provider

Customer Profile: Alentus is a publicly traded web hosting company with offices throughout North America and Europe and has been providing Internet and Microsoft services for small businesses and Fortune 500 companies since 1997.

Background: Alentus originally outsourced their Microsoft Exchange® and OCS® service offerings to a company who offered a standardized, inexpensive, out-of-the-box solution designed for occasional e-mail users. As Alentus promoted the offering and increased the number of subscribers, this firm failed to deliver the high availability and quality of service Alentus and their business clients demanded, causing the company to lose customers and damaging their brand.

Solution: In 2008, Alentus attended a Microsoft conference where they were introduced to Ceryx. Ceryx is an experienced outsourcing company that specializes in accommodating the complex requirements of larger organizations on a highly available platform. Alentus has a diverse customer base of small business clients, multinational organizations and governments that consume a variety of Alentus's Microsoft offerings. In order to accommodate such a spectrum of customers, Alentus chose to outsource their messaging clients to Ceryx, a more established and reliable industry player.

Benefits:

- » Partnership with a company that has experience maintaining large volumes of mailboxes for businesses that require high uptime and performance.
- » A solution that is built to the standards of an enterprise corporation and that is cost effective and flexible enough to exceed the needs of all SOHO/SMB and Mid-Market customers.
- » Close integration between the Alentus and Ceryx, ensuring that customer concerns are resolved immediately and exposure to Ceryx product initiatives are communicated quickly to the reseller – enabling Alentus to stay ahead of the competition.

Alentus Learns Valuable Lessons from Negative Experience with Out-of-the-Box Email Communications Provider and Switches to Ceryx

Background:

Alentus was started by two brothers in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada in 1997. Today, with offices across North America and the UK, Alentus offers a variety of Internet services, including Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft SharePoint, OCS, dedicated web and application hosting. As the company grew, Alentus knew there were many reasons they should consider outsourcing their messaging services to a specialized company. In addition to providing a product their customers demanded, outsourcing was more cost effective than deploying a solution themselves and would allow Alentus to focus on core offerings and expanding their business.

In 2007, Alentus signed on with a small, inexpensive messaging outsourcer based in the United States. Messaging communications was an instant success for Alentus, who signed up over eleven hundred individual mailboxes in just six months, and the company was excited about the possibilities the partnership had introduced to their roster of services.

Problems with reliability began to appear soon after Alentus started to promote the offering and continued to affect a larger numbers of subscribers each month. Mobile users would experience periods of dropped connectivity, while other customers would have difficulty accessing their e-mail. The small outsourcer's servers were designed to host more occasional e-mail users — customers who would not notice if their e-mail became unavailable for a short period of time, but Alentus's customers of small and medium sized businesses required consistent uptime. Issues such as network failure, lost connections, and the outsourcer's lack of accountability compounded, causing Alentus to go from hosting over one thousand Exchange customers to less than six hundred.

The consequences of their original outsourcing partner's poor customer service and unreliable quality were immediate; dissatisfied customers took their frustration to the Internet, using blogs, Twitter, and community boards to express their disapproval. And because Alentus had white labeled the services under their name, it was their company's brand that was tarnished. The outsourcer offered Alentus remediation to the time that the services became unavailable, but the combined experiences of their messaging customers caused damage to the Alentus name.

The multitude of problems caused by using an inexpensive and standardized service package designed for occasional e-mail users not only alienated Alentus' customers, it caused the company to lose confidence in their outsourcer. They quickly stopped promoting the service to new customers and began to look for a new firm to partner with.

“When we brought on our original outsource partner, we were completely unprepared for the myriad of problems that would come” explains Darren Hauch, “The company's servers did not have the capacity to support users who required e-mail at a consistent, business grade level.”



“We were relieved to learn about the solid customer base of enterprises and large businesses that Ceryx traditionally partners with” explains Darren Hauch, VP of Operations for Alentus. “We feel confident that Ceryx understands the needs of our customers.”

Solution:

In 2008, the current Information Technologies Manager of Alentus Corp. attended a Microsoft conference where Ceryx spoke on the importance of high availability. After initially being impressed with Ceryx’s depth of knowledge and the reputation of their established Research & Development team and Customer Support Group, Alentus was further encouraged to contact Ceryx by senior members of Microsoft Corporation.

Alentus’s negative experience working with a firm that emphasized low prices above reliability encouraged the company to cautiously research the market to find the best partner to carry their messaging services. There are many message hosting options that are priced competitively but are unable to provide an uptime guarantee that would meet the requirements of business grade clients as well as Alentus’ uptime and service standards. “We were relieved to learn about the solid customer base of enterprises and large businesses that Ceryx traditionally partners with” explains Darren Hauch, VP of Operations “We feel confident that Ceryx understands the needs of our customers.”

Benefits:

Reliable and Knowledgeable Support in North America:

Ceryx’s Toronto based Customer Support Group (CSG) is highly certified and many former CSG staff move on to take more senior roles within the company. Ninety-five percent of issues called into the CSG are handled by the first person who took the call. All of Ceryx’s CSG members are certified in multiple proficiencies and able to assist with reseller customer questions, contributing to an average Customer Satisfaction Score of 9 out of 10 .

Focused Account Management:

A continuous dialogue between Ceryx and Alentus ensures new Microsoft Exchange features services, and opportunities are identified, guaranteeing that Alentus remains a competitive message provider.

Control:

Key to the success of Alentus’s partnership with Ceryx is the customer control panel. This feature gives Alentus management capabilities over customer preferences and provides an intuitive interface for configuring a wide range of individual client settings. “Where previously we were forced to complete six or seven steps to accommodate our clients’ specific needs, using the Ceryx control panel means the work can be done with just a few clicks. The Ceryx panel has given us greater control and ease of use,” explains Darren Hauch. The company is now able to efficiently complete tasks that many of their business customers require, such as enabling mobile users, creating complex password policies, organizational groups, distribution lists, or even setting permissions on shared folders. By choosing a more specialized service provider that is designed to handle the heavy work load typical of many businesses, Alentus overcame the issues with service that caused them to sever relations with their previous outsourcer.



Reliability:

Alentus's customer base meant that they needed to partner with a company that would be able to meet the needs of several types of users. Ceryx's offering is built to the standards of an enterprise corporation and is cost effective and flexible enough to exceed the needs of SOHO/SMB and Mid-Market customers. Head of Marketing, Courtney Willner, adds, "Our staff is absolutely relieved and thrilled with the reliability of service Ceryx has provided. So much so, we are considering moving our own internal messaging needs to Ceryx, where our IT management would be able to reduce some of their maintenance and issue-response workload."

Conclusion:

Although Alentus partnered with Ceryx only a few months ago, the arrangement has greatly improved Alentus's trust in outsourcing services as well as their relationships with existing clients. "When we brought on our original outsource partner, we were completely unprepared for the myriad of problems that would come" explains Darren Hauch, "The company's servers did not have the capacity to support users who required e-mail at a consistent, business grade level." By outsourcing to a service provider that focused exclusively on cost, Alentus believed they were providing their clients with more value. The benefits of these original cost savings diminished when the partner company delivered poor customer service and failed to accommodate the specifications and reliability Alentus' customer base demanded. After carefully researching their options, Alentus determined that the high quality of service, reliability and industry expertise Ceryx offered would provide superior value to their customer's bottom line.

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